FREEMASONS OF THE CHURCH.

ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL, SYDNEY.

Dec. 14. Mr. French in the chair.—The Rev. H. T. Ellacombe, F.S.A., communicated an account and a drawing of an interesting Norman window in the hexagonal tower of Oxleworth Church, Gloucestershire. It being the anniversary of the foundation of the college, the chairman delivered an address, to which we may hereafter refer.

The following paper was read, "On the progress of the building of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, New South Wales," communicated by the architect, Mr. E. T. Blacket:—

Prior to my election as architect to the committee appointed for the purpose of effecting arrangements for the completion of the cathedral church of St. Andrew, the foundations of the tower, according to a design obtained from England, had been laid. On an examination of these foundations, with a view of ascertaining their sufficiency for the support of the superstructure intended to be raised upon them, they were found to be not only totally inadequate in point of massiveness, but also in mere dimensions much smaller than the tower itself. Various plans were suggested by which I might, to a certain extent, obviate the difficulty; but I was confident that any such temporary expedients would be eventually unsatisfactory to the public. I therefore recommended, as the only effectual means of remedying the defect, the entire removal of the foundations, which was unanimously approved. This arrangement met with the cordial approval of the Bishop of Australia; so much so, that in order to avoid any encroachment upon the *subscribed fund*, his lordship generously placed at the committee's disposal the additional sum of 250*l.* towards the liquidation of the expenses which would be incurred.

The removal of the tower foundations having been determined upon as an absolutely necessary measure, scope was thereby given for any improvement in the details of the general superstructure which might be deemed advisable. Instead, therefore, of occupying a certain portion of the lands at the western extremity, as the site of a single tower, which could not possibly be made serviceable for any important internal accommodation, but which must have stood solely as an ornamental adjunct to the main building, I proposed that the walls of the nave should be extended as far as the western boundary of the existing foundations, and that in lieu of the single tower, two smaller ones should be erected at the extremities of the aisles, after the manner of Canterbury, Westminster, and many other English cathedrals; by which arrangement not only would the whole area inclosed by the walls of the cathedral be made available for public worship, but great advantage would also be obtained, in an architectural point of view, by the addition of a *western front*, which must have been sacrificed had the original design been persisted in.

I also proposed the addition of a low lantern tower, rising from the juncture of the transepts with the nave and chancel, as a provision necessary in all buildings of the cruciform character, for the counteraction of the lateral thrust of the clerestory arches of the transept.

The committee having determined upon the plans and elevations for the building, advertized for tenders for the removal of such portions of the existing foundations as it was found necessary to take up, and for the relaying of those required for the prosecution of the new design. The main features of the contract were the removal of the existing tower foundations, and making the necessary excavations for, and laying others according to my design, containing about ten thousand feet of masonry, and for which the tender of Arthur Jones and Co. was accepted, to the amount of 418*l.* 10*s.* About four months were occupied in the performance of this contract (including a considerable delay occasioned by long-continued rains), and it is due to the contractors to observe, that the work throughout has been performed to the entire satisfaction of the committee.

For the second contract, also, the same builders were the successful competitors, in the amount of 1,125*l.* It comprises about 16,000 feet of chiselled stonework, in a girt of wall 330 feet long, and varying from ten to fifteen feet in height, extending from the north to the south transept, round the western front, and including the whole of the base course of the building within those limits; the southern and western doorways, with their panellings complete, all the half columns and buttresses to the westward of the transepts, and the sills of the windows of the nave and western front; an amount of work which, when completed, will present an effective appearance.

The dimensions of the cathedral, when finished, will be as follows:—The external length, from east to west, 178 ft.; length of the transepts from north to south, 116 ft.; internally, the length of the nave from the western door to the entrance of the choir will be 106 ft., and of the choir, from its entrance to the eastern window, 53 ft.; the breadth of the nave and side aisles will be 62 ft.; and of the choir within the screens, 27 feet. The height of the western towers will be 116 ft.; of the lantern tower, 84 ft.; and of the roof, 64 ft.

PROPOSED RESTORATION OF WARE CHURCH.

Ware, "so named from a sort of dam anciently made there to stop the current, commonly called a *weare* or a *ware*," * is on the river Lea, at a very short distance from Hertford. The town was built at a very early period, certainly in the tenth century. There was a church here before the Conquest, for Hugh de Grentemaisnil, lord of Ware, gave it, in the Conqueror's time, to the Abbey of St. Ebrulf, in Utica, in Normandy: this was before 1081.†

In 1241, Ware was the scene of a great tournament, proclaimed by Gilbert Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, in spite of a regal prohibition of such exhibitions of skill and strength; when this noble, then the principal peer of England, was thrown from his horse and trampled to death.

The earliest account of the town is that given by John Norden, in 1593.

The "great bed of Ware" has a wide reputation, and would seem to have had it even in Shakspeare's time; for our poet, in "Twelfth Night," makes *Sir Toby Belch* say to *Sir Andrew Aguecheek*, when bidding him write a challenge, set down in it "as many lies as will lie in the sheet of paper, although the sheet were big enough for the bed of Ware in England."—(Act III, s. 2.)

King Henry VIII., in the 38th year of his reign, gave Ware Church to the master and fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, in whose hands the living still is: they are also the lay impropriators. It is in the deanery of Braughing, and in the diocese of London.

There are no remains of the first-mentioned church. The present structure, dedicated to St. Mary, is chiefly of the perpendicular period, but has portions of the decorated period; and belongs mainly to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

It consists of a western tower with small spire, a nave with north and south aisle, a south porch, transepts, a chancel, north and south chapel, and sacristy.

The dimensions may be stated as follows:—

	FT.	IN.
Length of the nave inside, to the chancel arch	81	0
Width	22	0
Width of aisles	12	9
Whole width of church inside, including main columns (which are 3 feet in diameter)	53	6
Length of nave aisles to transept	57	9
Transept from north to south (23 feet wide)	72	0
Chancel, length	40	6
——, width	23	3
The height of the tower	78	0
Height of the spire, about	30	0

The nave is separated from the aisles by four lofty arches, and columns on each side, which support a clerestory. It has a king-post roof, apparently of chesnut, open to the boarding, with arched wall-pieces under each tie-beam, springing from corbels; the spandrel formed by the wall-piece on each side is filled in with open tracery. The open timber roofs of the aisles, formed into panels by the principal timbers, have been painted white and red, and ornamented with texts and scrolls. The roof of the chancel is a modern restoration.

The south chapel is separated from the chancel by a large semi-circular archway, divided into two by ribs springing from a central column of purbeck marble, and having the spandrel formed by the ribs filled with panelling. To the west it is separated from the south transept by an elegant wooden screen of the perpendicular period, which is partly destroyed. This may have been originally part of the rood-screen, and had a small gallery along the top of it. The ceiling of the chapel is formed into 24 panels, filled with elegant tracery in a star shape, and once elaborately decorated with colours and gold. In the centre of each panel is painted a sitting figure, on a grey ground, with Latin texts around it. The tracery is cut,—in red and yellow; and the carved bosses at the intersection of the panels are gilt. It is altogether a most interesting and valuable example of the style of the period, and should be carefully restored.

The westernmost window in the chapel (seen externally in the engraving) is at present blocked up, and against it is a large, sculptured monument, of Ionic columns and broken pediment, to Richard Fanshawe, Esq., of Ware Park, who died 1666, aged 59.

On the north wall of the chancel is a large monument to W. Murvell, Esq., who died 12th March, 1826, and left considerable sums to the poor of the parish. There are several incised stones in the church, from which the brasses have been removed. Two of the latter are in the vestry, one dated 1454, and the other 1470.

In the chapel on the north side of the chancel, where an entrance-door has been interpolated, the font, removed from the west end, is placed. The latter is a very curious and well-known example, and is, unfortunately, in a very bad condition. It is octagonal, 3 feet 10 inches high, and 3 feet in diameter. In each of the eight panels which form the sides is a sculptured figure—St. George, St. Christopher, St. Katherine, &c. At the foot of small angular buttresses and pinnacles, which divide the panels, are angels with musical instruments: below is a series of quatrefoil panels.

In the north transept is an ugly lumbering gallery, blocking a large and elegant "imbricated" window: it was built for the blue-coat boys of Christ's Hospital, "by a Governor," in 1687.

The west end of the church is disfigured by a similar ugly adjunct, containing the organ. The pulpit, pews, and stoves, all want revision.

The outside of the church is in a truly deplorable, and partly a dangerous condition. It is constructed of flint work, with dressings of clunch, and the whole has been covered in modern times with rough-cast, which has separated from the walls, and is now ready to fall on the heads of passers by. The stone mullions and tracery of the windows have mostly disappeared, and have been replaced by wood and cement, and all the strings and mouldings were cut off for the convenience of rough casting. The copings are loose, and the roofs decayed.

Not before it was required, therefore, have the parish determined on the substantial repair of the building, and our engraving represents the church as proposed to be restored, under the direction of Mr. George Godwin, with the exception of the pinnacles shown on the stairs' turrets, at the junction of the nave and chancel, which are introduced simply as a suggestion. All that is to be done is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the fabric.

Our engraving shows the church as it will appear seen from the south-west; the window in the south transept, we should mention, is one that was put in a few years ago by the late vicar, and is not to be replaced.

The present vicar, the Rev. J. W. Blakesley, and the churchwardens, Messrs. Hudson, Waller, and Hitch, have exerted themselves most praiseworthily in support of the building.

* Gibson's "Camden's Britannia," p. 296.
† Clutterbuck's "Hertford."

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